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THREE DAYS IN AN ITALIAN HOME.

IN TWO PARTS.—PART I.

LAST year my old longing for travelling was again gratified. Once more I was in Italy, at Nice—beautiful Nice, with its wondrous skies and sapphire-like sea; its olive woods, and palms, and aloes; its mountains, luxurious valleys, and rich pasture-lands; and yet I was not content. When from the scenery around I turned to examine Nice itself—when, after paying a due tribute of admiration to the country thus lavishly endowed, I sought to learn something of its inhabitants, their customs, their social life, my dissatisfaction commenced. There seemed no individuality in this town; no leading features among its population. I found no interior to peep into, no traits of national character to record.

Nice takes its tone from the English and French, Bavarians and Russians, who make it their winter residence; the English influence, however, being predominant, as is evidenced by the number of British comforts and indispensabilities our country-people have introduced: English bathing-machines on the sunny beach; English goods and warehouses at every turning; chemists' shops, complete in all their time-honoured insignia; stay-makers to royal English duchesses; English groceries, hosiery, baby-linen; all are here to be found, besides English clubs, English doctors, English agency-offices—in fact, every imaginable device wherewith John Bull delights to surround himself when abroad.

Now all this may be very delightful, but it is certainly not instructive; and to those who think some improvement may be gleaned from foreign travel beyond seeing all the sights and taking all the drives set down in *Murray's Handbook*, it is particularly annoying to find themselves in a society where the prejudice and party-spirit, gossip and twaddle, into which a number of idle people must inevitably fall, are actively at work; within whose circles a native is rarely seen, and where a total indifference as to the history or condition of the country where they are sojourning is displayed. I was beginning to fret under this exclusiveness, and was endeavouring to resign myself to the conviction that my visit to Nice would be barren of reminiscence, when my good genius came to my aid, and one day, on the Promenade des Anglais, brought me face to face with the Comtesse de Laval, a Piedmontese widow lady I had known two or three years previously in Tuscany. She had lately come with her brother, a veteran general, who had lost an arm in the campaigns of '48-'49 against the Austrians, to reside on

some property they had purchased in the neighbourhood. It was a most charming rencontre for me; and they really seemed so cordial, that making all requisite allowances for Italian exaggeration, I could not but believe the pleasure was mutual. The comtesse's first inquiry was if I were a *fiancée*, for in this respect all Italians are alike—Piedmontese or Neapolitans, from the north or from the south, they equally consider matrimony the sole object of a woman's life. Disappointed at my reply, she glanced nervously round to see whether I was unattended; but the sight of a servant reassured her, while I vainly attempted to demonstrate that my advancing years would speedily render any escort superfluous.

With a fixed determination to defer to the vassalage under which she considered I ought to be restricted, she begged me to take her to call upon the friends with whom I was staying, in order to proffer a request that I might be permitted to accompany her for a few days to her brother's villa at Latte, some thirty miles' distance from Nice—her own house in the vicinity being under repair. We were all amused at the stately old lady's punctilio; but the kind invitation, it is needless to say, was willingly accepted, and an early day appointed to set out.

Everybody has heard of the Corniche Road—the Riviera di Ponente; that is, the Shore of the West—which connects Nice with Genoa, and that portion of it leading to Latte is perhaps the most beautiful of the whole. October had already commenced, but no trace of autumn had as yet stolen over the landscape, no chillness in the balmy air reminded one of the lateness of the season. Our way at first wound along a gradual ascent, bordered with olives, cherubias, cypresses, orange-trees, and the maritime pine, and commanding the most extensive inland prospect, where mountains upon mountains displayed exquisite varieties of colouring and form; whence a sudden turn of the road brought us to heights overhanging the Mediterranean, with its endless succession of headlands and bays, towns nestling beneath the shelter of a protecting rock, or cresting some rugged eminence; while the blue waters stretched forth in their calm majesty, scarcely a ripple on their glass-like surface, scarcely a murmur as they wafted their wreaths of spray towards that highly favoured shore.

Soon after passing Turbia—a village constructed of Roman ruins—the road began to descend, always overhanging the sea; and then, far, far beneath us, accessible only by a very circuitous route, we saw Monaco, the capital of the smallest sovereignty in the world, with its towers and fortifications, rising along a rugged promontory, which flung its arms protectingly around the tiny city, and formed a bay, so graceful in

its curve, in the outline of the hills which rose above it, that the scene looked like a gem worthy of Italy's diadem of beauty. From this I was directed to turn my gaze in the direction of Roccabruna, another town in this same Lilliputian principality, situated upon the shelving side of a mountain, so exceedingly precipitous, that the marvel is how it ever could have been built, or men found agile enough to climb there; the popular legend being, that, some hundred years ago, the whole slid some distance down the face of the rock to its present locality, without destroying its castle or other structures.

Through avenues of rhododendrons and oleanders, through woods where the rich green of the fig, bending beneath its luscious fruit, contrasted with the dusky foliage of the olive, we next came upon Mentone, the third and last town in the dominions of Florestan, Prince of Monaco, and Duke of Valentinois, who spends in Paris the revenues he obtains from his subjects by exactions which have rendered him deservedly unpopular. One oppressive right he possesses, is that of compelling all the population to grind their corn at his mills, and to buy their bread at his bakers; the result of which is, that the 5000 or 6000 subjects of the principality eat the worst bread in Italy. So the general said; and as he was of an agricultural turn, and had gone through the metaphorical act of beating his sword into a ploughshare, he was a great authority on such matters.

There has since been a rumour going the round of many of the newspapers, that the noble Florestan was treating with the government of the United States for the sale of his territories—a negotiation that would, no doubt, be equally gratifying to the pride and suitable to the interests of our transatlantic kinsmen, but one which the European powers would probably never permit to be carried into effect. Piedmont would greatly desire to become the purchaser; and situated as is the principality—lying like a wedge in her beautiful line of coast, which commences at Nice and terminates at Spezia—such a transfer seems most natural; but the Prince of Monaco has a grudge against the Sardinian government, and is obstinately opposed to treating with it on the subject.

Soon after leaving Mentone, we again dismounted to have a better view of a rocky defile, which seems to have riven the mountains asunder; and while sitting on the low parapet of the bridge thrown over the chasm, we were attracted by two figures advancing slowly in the direction whence we had come, in the costume of pilgrims, real *bonâ fide* pilgrims. Their appearance at once reminded me of those descriptions with which many of Sir Walter Scott's opening chapters abound. The elder of the two was a man of middle age, with handsome regular features, somewhat of a Moorish cast, to which his coal-black hair and bronzed complexion imparted an additional resemblance. His companion, whom we at once concluded to be his son, was a boy of eleven or twelve, with that golden hair so often observable in children in the south, which darkens rapidly as they grow up; a gentle suffering face, and an air of weariness in his gait, that, with the adjuncts of his picturesque attire, rendered him a very interesting little palmer. Both were dressed alike: in loose cloaks or robes of dark-green serge, with large oil-skin capes, thickly overlaid with scallop-shells, the largest between the shoulders, and smaller ones placed around, and in the front two crosses coarsely embroidered. A low-crowned, broad-brimmed hat—a long wooden staff, surmounted by a cross—a string of beads at the girdle—and a crucifix hanging from the neck, completed this equipment, which had neither wallet nor bag, nor any sort of receptacle for carrying food or raiment.

As they passed us, we perceived how coarse and travel-worn their apparel was, and how the little boy

lagged behind, requiring often an encouraging word from the elder pilgrim to urge him on; and being curious to learn somewhat respecting them, as an introductory speech, the general called out to inquire if they had come from a great distance, and whither they were bound. The man replied in broken Italian, they came from Murcia, in Spain, and that their destination was Rome; then, with an inclination of the head, was proceeding, when their interrogator approached the little boy, and dropped a few coins into his hand. The child looked up at his companion inquiringly, and receiving a gesture of acquiescence, accepted the money with downcast eyes, and kissed it, but without proffering a syllable. The father then took off his hat, and crossing himself, remained for a few seconds in the attitude of prayer, his lips moving silently, the boy sedulously following his example. When their orisons were concluded, the child drew from his bosom a small brass medal, with an image of the Madonna, which he presented to the general, always keeping the same silence, which augured ill for the gratification of our curiosity. However, as they stood still for a few minutes, looking over the precipice, I mustered up courage to be spokeswoman; and in the few words of Spanish I could put together, inquired if the little boy was not very much fatigued with his long travel.

'Sometimes,' was the reply; 'although I purposely make very short days' journeys. We have already been four months on the way, and we have still one hundred and fifty leagues to traverse before reaching Rome.'

'Always on foot?'

'Si, señora.'

'It is part of your vow?'

'Si, señora.'

'And that little boy is your son?'

'My only one.'

'You have undertaken this pilgrimage from a religious motive?'

'Pardon me, señora, but there are subjects which can only be divulged between our conscience and our God.'

We had now arrived at the domain, and found a peasant in waiting, with a mule to receive the packages, which the servants handed down from the carriage.

'Ah, here you are! and here is Maddalena too!' said the kind master in the Nizzardo patois, as a comely young woman, wearing a round straw-hat, trimmed with black velvet, shaped like the mandarin hats on tea-chests, and large gold earrings, came forward with a smiling face to welcome us.

'All well, eh?—the children, and the dog, and the cows, and the chickens. Ah, *briconna*, I see you!' poking at a little roll-about girl, who had hidden herself in her mother's skirts, and now peered at us out of her almond-shaped eyes—the eyes of Provence, soft and long. 'Now, mademoiselle,' turning to me, and addressing me in French, which was the language of the family among themselves, although, whenever he and his sister engaged in any animated discussion, they went off to Piedmontese—a hopeless compound of gutturals and abbreviations to my untutored ears—'now, mademoiselle, let me do the honours of a ruined villa without a road;' and he led the way, for about a quarter of a mile, through vineyards and olives, and orchards laden with fruit, till we came to a lane, and a large old-fashioned gateway, originally very much ornamented with trophies and armorial-bearings. A large watch-dog now bounded forward, and greeted his master by putting his paws on his shoulders, and brushing his nose against the general's gray moustaches; after which salutations, passing under a long trellis-walk of roses and vines, the latter trained along tall white columns, after the fashion of the old Genoese villas, we came upon a lawn studded with palms and oleanders, and bordered with thick groves of lemon-

trees, in the centre of which stood a beautiful palace, such as I had little expected to see in this secluded spot. A magnificent outer staircase, springing in double flights from the portico, and converging in a broad platform, conducted into a vestibule with glass-doors, from whence opened a spacious sala, or sitting-room. At the further end of this were two long windows, with closed Persian blinds, which the general threw open on my approach, and then I found myself upon a balcony overhanging the sea—so close, so very close beneath us, that I could have flung a pebble into it from where we stood. Both he and the comtesse enjoyed my surprise at the sudden transition, from the wooded scenery in the front of the palazzo, to the wide range of sea-view thus suddenly presented to me. The house, in fact, was built upon the shore of a beautiful little bay, shut in on one side by a promontory covered with feathered pines, and on the other by a ridge of rocks, which darted forward as if to complete its crescent-like shape, and form a safe harbour for the fishing-barks which now lay idly on the beach: beyond them appeared three successive headlands, each with its little town rising from the bosom of the waters—the whole so calm, so sunny, so brilliant, with its background of perfumed groves, and palms, and flowers, that it realised every anticipation, and concentrated in a glance all the varied attractions of the Riviera.

I was not allowed a long time to gaze uninterrupted, for the general reminded his sister that the dinner-hour had nearly arrived, and suggested we had better take off our bonnets. Any regular dinner-toilet, it may here be remarked, is very unusual amongst Italians when in the country, even in much more modern establishments than the one I am describing. The short sleeves and low dresses in which English ladies are wont to appear in everyday routine, would be considered by them the extreme of folly and bad taste. As the comtesse conducted me to my room—one of six large bed-chambers opening from the sala—in her gentle yet stately manner she renewed her apologies for receiving me with so little ceremony, repeating her declaration that we were literally *à la campagne*, in a dilapidated palace that her brother had purchased through a whim, because it had belonged to a decayed family in whom he felt an interest. There was no necessity for these excuses, however; and I was enabled to judge from what the Piedmontese called a rustic way of living, how much more luxury and expenditure were prevalent in Northern Italy, than in those southern parts of the peninsula in which my former experiences had lain.

The dinner, to which we were speedily summoned, was served in a large room on the ground-floor, corresponding in size with the sala upstairs, the doors at the end being thrown open, disclosing an enchanting view of the sea and the skiffs gliding along its sparkling waters. Here we found the general in conversation with a middle-aged, intelligent-looking man, whom he introduced as Signor Bonaventura Ricci, his friend and factotum, a resident of Ventimiglia, the adjacent town; and then, without further delay, we sat down to table, the comtesse alone making the sign of the cross, which is equivalent to saying grace with us. The dinner was a specimen of simple Italian fare, and as such I shall record it for the benefit of the curious in these matters: it commenced with a tureen full of *tagliarini*; a paste composed of flour and eggs, rolled out exceedingly thin, and cut into shreds—on the lightness and evenness of which the talent of the cook is displayed—boiled in broth, and seasoned with Parmesan cheese. Slices of Bologna sausage, and fresh green figs, for which, the general exultingly informed me, the neighbourhood of Ventimiglia was justly celebrated, were next handed round; and then appeared the *lesso*, a large piece of boiled beef, from which the broth had been made, with the accompaniment of tomato sauce. After this there came a large dish of fried fish, and the *arrostato*—

roast veal, or roast chickens, or something of the kind—which with a dolce, or sweet, completed the repast. Several sorts of wine, the produce of the last year's vintage, were produced by Signor Bonaventura, who had the keys of the cellar in his keeping, and their different merits eagerly pointed out. Notwithstanding their interest in the subject, however, neither he nor the general seemed to think of drinking a few glasses by way of test, but contented themselves with merely tasting the wine pure, and then mixing it with water. The dessert consisted of oranges, peaches, grapes, figs, and a melon, all gathered that morning in the garden; which, considering how far the autumn was advanced, was wonderful even for Italy, and bore witness that the exceeding mildness of the temperature—whence, it is said, the name of *Lacte* or *Latte* is derived—has not been exaggerated.

After dinner, we walked in the grounds, it being too late for a longer excursion; and the general and Signor Bonaventura, whose surname was certainly a superfluity, since nobody ever addressed him by it, explained to me sundry matters connected with the culture of the lemon-trees, which constituted the principal revenue of the estate. It is certainly a graceful harvest, gathered every two months all the year round; the 500 trees in the garden having yielded upwards of 100,000 lemons in less than ten months, and 20,000 or 30,000 more being looked for before Christmas. These are sold at from 40 to 50 francs per 1000—a franc is equal to 10d.—to traders, who either send them in cargoes to England and the United States, or else retail them at large profits to fruit-dealers for home consumption. The lemon-tree requires great care, and is manured every three years with woollen rags—a process likewise applied in many parts of the Riviera to the olives, which certainly attain to a size and thickness of foliage not seen elsewhere. They shewed me some lemon-trees which were being prepared for the reception of the rags. A circular trench, about a foot deep and two feet wide, is dug round the trunk, and in this the rags, mostly procured in bales from Naples, are laid; a curious assemblage of shreds of cloth gaiters, sleeves of jackets, bits of blankets, horse-rugs, and so forth—the whole conveying an uncomfortable idea of a lazzarone's cast-off clothes. A quantity not exceeding twenty pounds English weight is allotted to each tree, and then the earth, which had been displaced for their reception, is thrown over them, and they are left to ferment and gradually decompose. Some agriculturists throw a layer of common manure over the rags before covering them with earth, but Signor Bonaventura said many experienced persons contended it was unnecessary. Great precaution is requisite to prevent any blight from settling on the leaves, and in our walk, black specks were discovered on the glossy foliage, which it was agreed should be summarily dealt with; accordingly, next morning four or five peasant-girls were hard at work, mounted on ladders, carefully wiping each leaf, and removing the specks, which, if allowed to spread, would have endangered the life of the tree.

When it grew dusk we went upstairs to the sala, and looked over the letters and newspapers brought in from the Ventimiglia post-office. Politics are now in Piedmont an engrossing theme, domestic as well as foreign being freely discussed; and no restrictions on the press existing since the Constitution of 1848, newspapers of every shade of opinion are in circulation. The peculiar views of each member of the family found a response in the journals they habitually perused. The comtesse used to groan over the *Armonia*, the only periodical she ever looked at—the organ of the ultra-retrograde party, which invariably represented the country as on the eve of an atheistical and socialistic revolution, the fruits of the innovations on the ancient order of things; the only glimmering of light amid the foreboding darkness being the rapid return of heretical

England to the bosom of the church—such events as the abjuration of the archbishop of Canterbury and a hundred bishops being confidently announced one week, and the approaching conversion of the whole royal family the next. All this was balm to the good old lady's heart, and I often detected her gazing on me with a beaming look, as if praying I might follow this good example, although she abstained from any direct allusion to the subject. The general, who sided with the ministry, pinned his faith on the *Piedmontese Gazette* and the *Parlamento*, though his old exclusive feelings could not always be laid aside, and he sometimes grumbled at all the privileges of caste being done away; declaring there was no longer any advantage in being born noble, since he might find the son of his doctor or lawyer sitting by his side on the benches of the Chamber of Deputies, or wearing the uniform of the Guards, unattainable formerly to a bourgeois. As for Signor Bonaventura, he confided to me that, notwithstanding he should always uphold a constitutional monarchy, he thought there was no treason in looking at all sides of the question, so that he occasionally glanced at the *Italia e Popolo*—the organ of Mazzini, a perfect firebrand of republicanism and discontent; but 'Zitto, zitto,' he added, laying his finger on his lips, 'they would faint'—pointing to the comtesse and his patron—at the mere notion of such a thing.

At nine we were summoned to supper; after which we sat for some time on the beach, enjoying the beauty of the moonlight and the softness of the air, though, as far as the majority of the party were concerned, it was more properly speaking the physical comfort, the sensation of repose, which caused their satisfaction; for as respects the enthusiasm which almost every English person feels, or at anyrate expresses, beneath the influence of beautiful scenery, Italians, generally considered, are provokingly deficient.

The next morning we had visitors. Signor Bonaventura's two daughters, damsels of eighteen, or thereabouts, came by appointment to spend the day, and arrived soon after the breakfast of *café au lait* and chocolate had been served; this, with dinner at two, and supper in the evening, is the old-fashioned Piedmontese and Nizzardo system of refection. The sisters were fair specimens of Italian girls of the *mezzo ceto*, convent-educated, with ideas that never ranged beyond an excursion to Nice, or reading more extensive than the *Missal* or the *Almanach*. Immeasurably beneath country-bred English girls of a corresponding class in all intellectual points, they were undeniably superior in ease of manner, and the good taste and simplicity of their dress. As they stood upon the beach, watching the general bathing his large dog, looking so fresh and girl-like in their pretty, well-fitting light-blue muslins, and large round hats, they made me wish my young countrywomen would take a lesson in harmony and gracefulness of costume from continental maidens. They evidently looked upon the comtesse with profound awe, and upon me with great curiosity, as some rare animal escaped from a menagerie. It being impossible to carry on any conversation with them beyond monosyllables, I proposed we should walk out; and, accordingly, we passed most of the day, both before and after dinner, in exploring the neighbourhood, to their infinite delight, as I discovered that they rarely left the house except on Sundays; Italians of that class considering daily exercise for their womankind a superfluity, tending to form idle habits. Signor Bonaventura accompanied us, and towards me was very affable and communicative, although with regard to his daughters he evidently entertained very Oriental notions of their mental inferiority, and treated them as if they were incapable of receiving information, or as if it was not worth while to impart it to them.

In the course of our rambles, I was struck with the

singular appearance of some of the dwellings of the peasantry near the shore—high narrow towers, only accessible by a steep flight of steps, detached from the main building, with which they were connected by a wooden bridge. He told me these were vestiges of the times when the coasts of the Mediterranean were so often ravaged by the Algerine corsairs, that no hamlet was safe from their dreaded inroads. To secure the inhabitants as far as possible, these towers were constructed, to which, on the first alarm, they might fly for refuge, and raising the drawbridge, be at least secure from being carried off into slavery, though forced to be passive witnesses of the seizure of their cattle and the pillaging of their stores. In case of an attack, they defended themselves by hurling stones through spaces in the battlements upon their assailants, a few of a more modern description having loopholes in the walls for musketry. Happily, in these more peaceful days, the peasants have almost forgotten for what such fortresses were originally intended, and fixing their habitations in what have survived the inroads of time, can look down complacently upon their olives and fig-trees, without trembling at every sail that rises upon the clear horizon.

As we passed through woods of olives, Signor Bonaventura descanted *con amore* upon their value and utility, and classing them above my favourite lemon-trees, which can be cultivated only in sheltered situations, assured me that they were the great staple of the Riviera, although a good crop is only realised every second year—the produce of the intervening one being very inconsiderable. In the good years, the yield of each tree is estimated, according to its size, at from five to eleven francs clear profit; the trees are carefully numbered on each estate, and from 1000 to 1200 constitute a very fair *propriété*. When the olives turn black and begin to fall, sheets are laid beneath the branches, which are gently shaken to detach the fruit; whatever is thus obtained, is carefully spread on the floor of some rooms set apart for the purpose, and day by day, as the remaining olives successively ripen, they are shaken down and added to the store, until sufficient is collected to be sent to the mill, where it is pressed, and the oil flows out clear and sparkling. After this first process of pressing the fruit, there is a second one of crushing or grinding it, by which oil of an inferior quality, requiring some time to settle, is obtained; lastly, water is poured on the mass of stones and pulp, and the oil that rises to the surface is carefully skimmed, being the perquisite of the proprietor of the mill, who receives no other remuneration for his share in the transaction. The produce of the fig-trees is another though less lucrative source of revenue; great quantities are dried in the sun, and afterwards sold, not only for the supply of the country itself, but for the French market, where the figs of Ventimiglia, Signor Bonaventura declared, were as much prized as those of Smyrna. He shewed me large supplies in course of preparation, laid on long frameworks of reed lightly interwoven, which as soon as the sun rose were carried out, and remained all day exposed on the low parapet which divided the *jardin potager* from the beach. No guard was ever kept over them, and no fear seemed entertained of their being stolen. Indeed, the honesty of the peasantry and fishermen was marvellous, for in this same kitchen-garden—a strip of sandy soil stolen from the sea-shore—green peas, tomatoes, cucumbers, melons, and a variety of vegetables, were grown in profusion; and nevertheless, unprotected as it was, being without the precincts of the iron gate at the back of the house, which was closed for form's sake every night, nothing was ever missed—not a single fruit or vegetable misappropriated.

Our walk after dinner was so prolonged, that darkness overtook us on our way back as we were

scrambling through the dry bed of a torrent; but the kind comtesse had foreseen this, and a peasant, despatched by her to meet us, soon made his appearance with a blazing branch of pine-wood, which diffused a grateful fragrance. Some remarks on the picturesque appearance of this torch, and the properties of the pine, led to my hearing about the popular mode of fishing, *alla fucina*, which I was promised I should see the first cloudy night, moonlight being a bar to this pastime—a promise, by the by, that still remains to be fulfilled, thanks to the unbroken serenity of the weather during my stay at Latte. However, they shewed me the implements, which are simple enough; projecting from the stern of the boat, and elevated above the heads of those engaged in the sport is the *fucina*, an iron grating, piled with flaming pine-fagots, which cast a brilliant light upon the waters, illuminating their recesses with extraordinary clearness. The boat glides into all the little bays and rocky inlets, and the fish, scared yet attracted by the unwonted glare, are seen shooting rapidly along in all directions; while the fishermen, each provided with an instrument somewhat resembling a harpoon, with a staff twelve or fourteen feet long, spear them with great dexterity as they dart through the illuminated space. Fish of considerable size are thus taken frequently, and the enthusiasm attendant on the enterprise being extreme, a stormy night and a tempestuous sea prove only additional inducements to the adventurous fishermen.

BIRDS IN WINTER.

THE commonest observer, however unacquainted with natural history, could not fail to notice the absence of the birds, and the silence of the fields, during a walk in winter. The trees and hedges, those green summer-chambers which they inhabited, are unfurnished, and the wind blows through the naked branches with a sound like that of a hollow footfall in an empty house. Although their songs no longer ring through the tangled copse and the open valley, there are thousands of them that remain with us all the year round, rummaging for food in storehouses only known to themselves, and to the few who watch their habits in the wild and out-of-the-way places where lie their hidden granaries. Providence has further adapted them to meet the severity of the season, by making them pass nearly two-thirds of their time, during the shortest days, in sleep; so that they do not require so much food as is needed for their support when they are on the wing for so many hours together during the longer days of spring and summer. Their little round bright piercing eyes and sensitive beaks see and feel many minute things scattered abroad for their sustenance, which we in our greater wisdom do not perceive. It would take us long hours to discover what they find and feed upon among the decaying leaves that have fallen from a single tree; how then can we hope to discover the great abundance suited to their wants which the long miles of our shadowy woods conceal? Among velvet mosses, green in the hardest winter; in the crevices of rugged bark; in the holes and hollows of unsound trees; among the withering grass and weeds that fall unowned by man; in thousands of seeds that drop from the flowering hedge-plants; on hips and haws, which the frost has ripened and blackened; on ungathered wild-fruits, which have escaped rustic hands—they find materials for their table spread by nature in the forest; and near at hand, a shelter from the sleet and snow, where, with heads under their wings, they sleep securely when the norland wind pipes aloud through the deep dark nights of mid-winter. The flowers of summer, though long ago dead and abandoned by the bees, after they had gathered their honey from the dew-bowed and pollen-gilded cups, were afterwards filled with seeds, which misty autumn

ripened, and the winds burst and blew abroad, a banquet for the birds in winter. When the whole range of the wide landscape is white with snow, and neither dent of hoof nor print of foot breaks through the glittering waste, the birds find their way under bush and brake, and peck about beneath the fern and gorse—search the wood-stack, the corn-rick, and the hollow roots of trees—find something in the shelving bank and the bowery underwood, above which the snow lodges—while with the fluttering of their wings they shake off the flakes from the laden branches, like a shower of May-blossoms, to get at the few hawthorn-berries that still remain. In very severe weather, others, which are seldom seen excepting in their own wild haunts, throw off their natural shyness, and gather round the habitation of man. They approach the barn where the dusty thresher is at work, alight in the straw-yard amongst the cattle, hop and peck about the outhouses and stables, purloin the food that is given to the poultry, watching with keen eye until the owner is gone, then contending for the scattered grain even with the heeled and wattled chanticler. You startle them from out the tufted reeds and frozen water-flats that stand up like sharp scimitars, around the edge of the lonely mere, whose waters lie black as night amid the surrounding snow of the hedgeless moorland. In the hedges that gird solitary lanes and by-roads, seldom traversed, saving when the team is driven afield during the hay and corn harvest, they nestle together and find food, while the armed furze on the treeless common affords them a home-like shelter. The countless millions of seeds which the autumn winds have sown broad-cast over the country—the grubs of insects in cocoon-cell, or barely covered with earth, and many other sources, unknown as yet to man, furnish food for the birds in winter; and it is only during those hard, black, bitter, biting frosts, which sometimes, though not of late years, continued for long weeks together, that so many birds perish; for then the earth becomes hard as iron, and all the fruit and seeds that summer and autumn scattered, seem as if burnt up and blackened by fire.

The little titmouse rummages about the roofs of the cottages and farmhouses, for insects that have buried themselves in the warm thatch; we see it hanging back downwards, pulling and tugging at the straw or reeds, and examining every inch it draws out beyond the eaves, while, quick as thought, its busy beak picks off and swallows the drowsy prey, before it has time to awake from its winter slumber. Beside rivers, streams, and unfrozen spring-heads, where it seems to watch the upcoming of the silver sand, the pretty wagtail—that strides out like a grenadier on the march, instead of hopping like other little birds, whose motions appear as cramped as if their legs were tied together—is on the look-out for the least stir of insect-life, or almost anything in the shape of food; for it has a most accommodating maw, and from the spawn of the frog to the black woolly down that is blown into the water from the tall nodding bulrushes, nothing seems to come amiss to it; and it thinks little of following cattle, or a mounted horseman, for miles along the road in hard frosty weather, in the hope of obtaining a meal. The thrush and blackbird—those hardy minstrels, that scarcely allow the struggling snowdrop to appear before they peep over the icy boundaries of winter, and pipe sweetly about the primrose-coloured skies of the coming spring—now frequent the home-croft, the garden, and the orchard. We are startled by the loud rushing of their wings in almost every rural nook and outhouse in the country; from cart and cow shed they dash by, and make their way to some neighbouring hedge or tree, until we are gone, when they hurry back again, in search of the food which they find most plentiful around our habitations. Many a meal do the wild wood-pigeons now make out of the delicate hearts of

winter-greens, and the tender 'eye-bud' of turnip-tops, as country epicures too well know, who obtain their vegetables from the crops of the birds they shoot, by taking out, washing, and cooking the undigested green-buds, which the winged wanderers had flown many a long league to gather, little dreaming that in addition to their own savoury bodies, their very food would be made to supply the table with a dainty dish. Larks of all kinds are found everywhere—by the bleak breezy sea-side, or as far inland as we like to go—the autumn-sown corn-fields are often covered with them—and the bunting is one of the greatest of the farmer's winter plagues. A flock of these larks go to work at a cornstack like house-breakers; they have the roof or thatch off in no time. They do not stand pecking here and there, and darting in and out like the sparrows, but lay bare at once the rich ripe golden ears, and batten on the very heart of the plummy sheaves; and there fifty feed like one, and make noise enough for a thousand. But the corn they devour, though considerable, is often as nothing compared with the damage they so unwittingly cause, through the rain and snow lodging in the sheaves they have unthatched, and permeating the whole stack, until the very lowest sheaves are reached by the decay and damp, let in by these unconscious and noisy robbers, who will never starve while there is a corn-rick in field or farmyard. Even the 'singer at heaven's gate' is in winter of the earth earthy; and whatever the poets may say about his picking up fragments of angels' songs in his soarings, when driven by hunger he will pick up anything he can lay hold of, and even go the length of fighting his brother lark for possession of the booty.

The golden-crested wren—the very smallest of all British birds, and which, when full grown, rarely weighs more than eighty grains—remains with us the year round, and survives the severity of our keenest winters. You look at him, and wonder how he manages to keep the life in his tiny body at this inclement season. But see him out in field, wood, or plantation, and then you will confess that there is not a livelier little fellow in all the world of birds. He never seems at rest, but is always in motion, as if he found it necessary to stir constantly about to keep his bit of a body warm. You see him one minute pecking away at the fir-cones; the next, he darts off into the thick-leaved ivy, as if to bury himself in the green and pleasant recollections of summer; anon, his golden plumes are seen waving amid the crimson holly-berries, as if determined to see only what awakens agreeable associations, and to shut his little eyes to the dark and dreary side of everything. When we consider the labour of that fairy-bird in the breeding-season, winter must come to it like a time of rest; for the journeys it has made during a day while feeding its young, have been noted by more than one naturalist, and found to average thirty-six in an hour, and to continue without cessation for sixteen hours a day. What human mother ever undertook a greater labour for the support of her children, than this little golden-crested wren? The many miles it must have flown, and the weight of food it must have carried, for many days, must make the winter season one long holiday. Were all those little hungry bills agape now, all her motherly perseverance and affection could not save them from perishing.

But robin-redbreast is the greatest favourite of winter birds: he brings with him the memory of the tears of childhood—the happiest tears we ever shed—of fallen leaves, and those 'pretty babes,' which his ancestors covered so 'painfully;' and while we think of the pious old ballad, we forget that he is the most pugnacious little songster that ever left footprint in the snow. The power of poetry has opened every heart and every hand for cock-robin; and he will never

want while childish fingers are to be found to scatter crumbs on the frosted lintel. Then he sings, too, as if he knew that he had got all the silence to himself, and that no other bird is there to 'tootle' into the cold ear of Winter. Like the minstrels of old, he pays for the food we give him in notes of haughty song; and while you listen with closed eyes, you forget the waste of snow that lies around, and are carried away into a land hung over with the long leaves of summer. Though the wind rumples and crumples his every feather, and blows them back with such force that you think they never can fall right again, he clings to the paling bravely; and if he has made up his mind, will have 'his sing out' in spite of wind, frost, or snow. He is as familiar to all as the daisy in spring, as the snow in winter, that makes him a pensioner on our bounty. Other birds only migrate from one side of our island to the other; some coming from the north to the warmer south; while a few quit England for Scotland, and are never seen in their old summer haunts during winter. Sometimes, though very rarely, a late brood of migratory birds are left behind; but they seldom live to behold their companions come back again over the sunny sea in spring.

Our wonder soon ceases when we cast our 'thinking eyes' over the out-of-doors world, and see the provision made by Providence for the Birds in Winter; and not only for such as abide with us all the year long, but also for the myriads of wild-fowl that wing their way to our lonely lochs, marshy meres, and inland rivers. That many of them find food which we at present are unacquainted with, is no marvel, seeing that we are only just beginning to understand dimly the nourishing and sustaining powers of the earth. As from deeply delled land a new flora will arise, such as was never seen in that locality within compass of the oldest living memory; so may there be in every spadeful of earth a hidden sustenance for those creatures which in the ears of God are never dumb. Numbers of birds swallow sand and pebbles without injury; and partially dissolved food has been found in our winter-birds, which the finest analysis could only reduce to rich loamy and earthy matter. We must still in many things inquire, like Job of old: '*Who provideth for the raven his food, when his young ones cry unto God?*'

AMERICAN JOTTINGS.

THE KNOW-NOTHING MOVEMENT.

WITHIN the last twelve months, a mysteriously organised association has sprung into vigorous existence in the United States, under the odd designation of 'Know-Nothings.' The Know-Nothings were not spoken of during my stay in America (1853), and the commanding attitude they have already assumed, presents another striking instance of the rapid growth of new social features in this remarkable country.

That the fraternity of Know-Nothings should have made such head within so short a period, doubtless argues a wonderful unanimity of feeling on the particular grievance which it is the design of the members to rectify; and yet, accepting the popular accounts of the association, we doubt whether the parties concerned have thought deliberately on what may possibly be the result of their doctrines, supposing them to be carried out to the extremity which is generally avowed. As far as an 'outsider' may presume to form an opinion, Know-Nothingism is a profession of hatred against foreign settlers, more particularly when Roman Catholics; and it is an especial aim not only to exclude all

such from places of trust and honour, but, as is said—though we cannot believe things will be carried this length—to refuse them employment wherewith to earn their daily bread. That America, entirely settled as it has been within the last two centuries and a half by foreigners of various races and forms of religious belief, and where every white man may trace his origin to a European ancestor, and, also, where the capital, the manual labour, and the ingenuity of immigrants, are essential to national progress—that such a country should do anything to repel accessions of foreigners, and to throw contumely on those recently settled amongst them, seems like an act of national insanity. In fact, looking to the shrewdness of the American character, we are necessitated to believe that along with the grudge against foreign immigrants is mixed up some unexplained political manœuvre.

Judging from recent developments, it would appear that the enmity of the Know-Nothings is directed principally against the Roman Catholic Irish—the very people who have been pouring in hundreds of thousands over the States, everywhere giving their much-wanted services in hotels, private dwellings, and in the execution of public works. So far as I had an opportunity of observation, these services were duly appreciated. As regards domestics, it was tolerably evident that but for young Irishwomen, the daughters of immigrants, vast numbers of families would be left without hired assistance, and the finest ladies be brought to the predicament of helping themselves. In point of fact, as noticed in my former papers, the Irish of both sexes have for some time been superseding the coloured races in the free states, and becoming an essential element in society. Moreover, the manner in which these humble exiles gradually acquired habits of self-respect and independence, was alluded to as a pleasing feature of their character; and when it is added, that their children are usually indistinguishable in language and appearance from the children of native Americans, we are more at a loss to understand the origin of the persecution. It surely cannot be a dread of the growth of Catholicism; if so, there appears to be some mistake. In 1850, there were in the States 35,711 churches, of which the Roman Catholics had only 1112; and out of a church accommodation for nearly fourteen millions of people, all the Roman Catholics mustered were 620,950. Nor does it appear, with all the immigration now going on from continental Europe and from Ireland, that Roman Catholicism is increasing in the ratio of other forms of Christianity: I was, indeed, assured that Catholicism has no little difficulty in maintaining its footing in the midst of the many eager agencies calculated to withdraw its supporters.

So much may be said of the unreasonableness of the Know-Nothing movement. Unfortunately, the subject has an opposite side. Americans declare, that the settlement of large masses of uninstructed foreigners in the midst of the community, is politically dangerous, besides being socially troublesome. Scattered thinly over the States, and mingling with the native population, there is, it is said, nothing to give uneasiness. But that principle of scattering is exactly the thing which neither the Irish nor the Germans are fond of. Independently of those who are hired as servants, or who proceed to the rural districts as farmers or labourers, great numbers cluster together in the large cities, where they are able to act in combination, and to disturb the ordinary action of free institutions. Unaccustomed to perform a part in constitutional modes of government, and of excitable feelings, they too readily lend themselves to designing politicians, and occasionally resorting to demonstrations of physical force, become in a high degree obnoxious to public re-
sentment. Such is presumed to be the true explanation

of the American animosity towards foreigners, though by no means justifying the measures which the Know-Nothings have thought fit to adopt.

Shrouded in secrecy, meeting under night, and constituted with illegal oaths and symbolical forms, the fraternities of Know-Nothings may be said to resemble the dark and mysterious societies of the middle ages; and the world sees with surprise that the modern democracies of America, like the ancient despotisms of Central Europe, require a Vehmgericht to rectify social abuses. That mystery should have been at all employed in establishing Know-Nothingism, is explicable only on the ground that, if publicity had been given to the movement at starting, the objects of the institution could not have withstood the assaults of the press, or the malevolent influence of designing politicians. Be this as it may, the fact of secret organisation being deemed necessary in a matter of political and social reform, is not calculated to excite any general admiration of republican institutions; and we are necessarily led to infer, that *freedom*, as it exists in America, is associated with some of the worst features of an irresponsible authority. Resorting, from one cause or another, to secret plans of operation, the Know-Nothings, in their central and local 'wigwags,' as their lodges are called, conducted their affairs with such profound tact, that when the time came for disclosing their powers, all the old political parties were struck with dismay, and the press was not a little astonished and mystified.

From anything that can be gathered from the newspapers, all political parties among the native Americans have been to blame in producing those evils which the charter of Know-Nothingism feigns to correct. At the primary elections, all have courted and used the votes of foreigners, with little regard to law or even common decency. Take the case of New York, which is instanced as not the most flagrant. Here there prevails a system of universal suffrage, under which foreigners, on giving legal notice of an intention to be naturalised, are admitted to the rights of citizenship. Now, it is notorious that this legal notice is frequently not exacted, and that votes of recently arrived immigrants are taken at the polls, merely if a citizen declares that he has heard them express a wish to be naturalised. In other words, hearsay affidavits are accepted as if they had been legally recorded. Demoralised in this manner at the outset, and puffed up by the cajoleries of party, we need feel no surprise that the more ignorant order of foreigners should become troublesome neighbours to the inhabitants of New York, Brooklyn, and Williamsburgh—the well-known foci of immigrants from Ireland. The fundamental error for correction, consists in the loose administration of the naturalisation laws, as well as the system of voting, which seems to be based on no regularly made up roll of electors, and consequently admits of continual personal contests at the various polls.

Just let us take a glance at some of the election business at the beginning of last November. Scene—Williamsburgh, with a crowd collected at the polling-place. An Irishman goes forward to tender his vote, which is challenged by one of the deputy-sheriffs. Instead of the matter being settled quietly, a disturbance ensues, owing to some alleged rudeness on the part of the acting officials. A rush made by ten deputy-sheriffs, each using his club freely, is met by an infuriated band of Irishmen, who tear down fences, throw stones, and commence a fight. The fire-alarm bells are rung, and hundreds of citizens leave their houses, but few are inclined to mingle in the mêlée, where it is reported that many persons are lying dead in the streets, while bullets fly in every direction. Immediate result—one person killed, and many others dangerously wounded. The uproar is finally quelled

by calling out the military. A few days afterwards, however, a large number of natives assembled and recommenced the riot. Marching in procession, and numbering about five hundred, they fired at every Irishman who came in their way, and at last attacked a Roman Catholic church, in order to destroy it. In this outrage, they were stopped by the authorities, and dispersed by the military. The next phase of the riot was avengeful attempt of the Irish to tear down a Methodist chapel; but this also was frustrated by the military, not, however, till there was a good deal of pistol-firing, and one man received a shot. At the funeral of the murdered man, there was a grand procession of the fire-engine companies, according to the usual practice in making up a public spectacle. No mention is made of the capture or punishment of the murderer, who appears to have escaped from justice.

It will now be seen that in these troubles, religious is deeply intermingled with political dissension. The matter in dispute is, evidently, as much Protestant against Catholic, as native *versus* foreigner, if not more so. In the general conduct of the riots, we are reminded of the No-papery insurrections which broke out in England seventy years ago; the only difference being, that these recent demonstrations in the United States are on a less destructive scale. With the growth of Know-Nothingism, however, we cannot tell what they may come to. As England had her Lord George Gordon, America boasts of an equally fanatical demagogue, who is said to be a Scotsman by birth, and styles himself the 'Angel Gabriel.' This personage goes about preaching in the open air to great crowds of people. Taking his stand on a chair, a stump, or the top of a barrel, he summons an audience around him by the blowing of a horn, and forthwith commences one of his wild and inflammatory harangues. New York, we should suppose, is the head-quarters of the Angel, for he is often described as holding forth on Sundays in the Park—an open space, adjoining Broadway—whence he migrates with a troop of followers by ferry to Brooklyn, and there creates extraordinary commotion among the Irish. In the early part of last June, a newspaper had the following notice:—'There was preaching as usual yesterday afternoon in the Square at the head of East Broadway, and also in the Park. The Angel Gabriel preached from the steps of the City Hall, without being molested. He was followed by another man, and Mrs Bishop, an elderly woman, both of whom entertained a large audience for some time. Gabriel, after leaving the Park, was followed by over a thousand persons, and it is said that he and his followers went to Brooklyn.' The Angel's visits to this populous offshoot of New York, having for some time previously created considerable disturbance, the authorities, with more than usual activity, made preparations for preserving the peace. Bodies of police, and regiments of foot and cavalry militia, were in readiness in case of disturbance. The progress of the row is described as follows:—

About four o'clock in the afternoon, a large crowd began to collect in Atlantic Street, near Hoyt Street, where, on a vacant space of ground comprising several lots, the preachers were to hold forth. A pile of rubbish answered for the platform, and shortly after five o'clock, a procession from New York, headed by the Angel Gabriel, appeared on the ground. The Angel blew his trumpet, and took his position, when the large multitude gathered round him, and he proceeded with his harangue, which was listened to without disturbance. Another preacher now took the stand. Meanwhile, the Angel went off in a carriage, to cross by the south ferry, a crowd following him, and likewise a body of police, who were pelted with volleys of stones. Several Irish were captured; but this exasperating the crowd, they fired some shots at the

police, and these made their way only by drawing their revolvers, and firing. A number of persons received shots, and one man 'had his jaw shot off.' The appearance of civil war in the streets gave much alarm to the more peaceful inhabitants. By means of fresh detachments of police, and the knowledge that the military were in reserve, the streets were at length cleared, and many rioters were arrested. In the course of the disturbance, shouts of defiance were uttered against the odious Know-Nothings.

Elated by the mischief he had caused on this occasion, the Angel Gabriel continued his extravagant orations, not only in New York, but in distant parts of the country. Shortly after the above events, we find him preaching in Maine. From Bath, a town in that northern state, the following telegraphic message is seen in the New York newspapers, of date July 7:—'The Angel Gabriel lectured here on Wednesday and Thursday evenings against popery. On the last occasion, the crowd was large, and a disturbance occurred. A mob of men and boys proceeded to the Old South Church, used by the Catholics as a place of worship, broke open the doors, rang the bell, and displayed the American ensign from the belfry. They afterwards set the church on fire, and it was burnt to the ground. No further destruction of property took place, but a mob of about one hundred paraded the streets, yelling and hooting until nearly morning. No arrests were made.'

Previous to these events, collisions between Irish and native Americans had occurred in various states. Several serious encounters had taken place in New Orleans. We are told that as early as the 29th of March, an effort was made on the part of the Americans in that city, 'to preserve or restore the purity of the ballot-box. Some eight hundred Americans, armed with revolvers and bowie-knives, proceeded to the seventh ward, the Irish head-quarters, and during the day endeavoured to keep out illegal voters. In the afternoon of that day, a mob of Irish, headed by a police-officer, marched into the room where the election was held, for the purpose of driving the Americans from the polls. They were met by American arms, and in less than five minutes the room was cleared of every Irishman, and two of their number were killed.' Subsequently, the Americans, apprehending fraud, went in a body, and destroyed the ballot-box; the excitement daily increased; and such was the hostility between the Irish and Americans, that for some time the citizens went about armed. Matters at length settled down; but on turning to the newspapers for September, it is seen that the mortal grudge between the Irish and Americans of New Orleans broke into renewed acts of violence. Savage fights with clubs and firearms took place; in the streets; several persons were killed, and many carried away dangerously wounded. At length the mayor called out the military, and order was once more restored. The Know-Nothing lodges in New York are said to have been made promptly acquainted with these events, by telegraphic communications.

About the time of the New Orleans riots, a disturbance of a similar kind occurred at Newark, in New Jersey. It originated in a Protestant procession of two thousand persons, four abreast, nearly all of whom are said to have been 'armed with pistols, as if they anticipated an attack.' The display which they made roused the indignation of certain Irish, who, stationed at a Catholic chapel, fired on the procession as it passed. This was the signal for a general riot. 'The attack from the church rendered that an especial object of attention, and in less than five minutes from the first difficulty, the church was completely riddled, its doors and windows broken, its seats torn up, its altar dismantled, its organ destroyed, and the whole interior a mass of ruin.' One man was killed, and

many wounded. In this sectarian demonstration, the Angel Gabriel did not make his appearance, but he could not have been far distant. On the 26th of September, he began to blow his horn in Independence Square, Philadelphia, and a crowd having been collected, to the danger of the public peace, the Angel was walked off by the police to the lock-up, there to await magisterial inquiry. What became of this active incendiary is not related; he is probably still pursuing his 'mission.'

In the paper which notes these events, we alight upon a paragraph descriptive of a riot which broke out at Cincinnati, between Americans and Germans; the latter being spoken of as Roman Catholics, and animated with an uncompromising hatred against a Sabbath-school, which a body of native Presbyterians had lately established in the place. 'The second Sunday,' says our informant, 'after the school was opened, a party of Germans waited upon the officers of the school, and requested them to close it. This request was, of course, not complied with. The following Saturday-night the school-room was entered by persons who tore up the school-books, and broke up and threw the furniture into the street. The trustees determined to open anew. Not to multiply details, the Germans informed them that they would destroy the school afresh, and kill those they found in it! Some friends of the trustees, finding war-to-the-knife declared, opened the campaign themselves, and attacked two houses occupied by Germans. A riot ensued. Among other incidents, three men were shot, but not fatally wounded. The school is to be opened next Sunday, come what may.' The result is not intimated, neither is any information given respecting the original cause of the disturbance. Perhaps, the Germans had in some way been previously exasperated. The distribution of tracts outraging the feelings of Catholics, and breathing little of the gentle spirit of the Gospel, is spoken of as a cause of deadly strife in New York.

From such casual notices, we may judge of the hostility which seems to have sprung up between natives and foreigners in various parts of the United States. We should, however, be doing an injustice to the Americans, if we considered that they carried their animosity into private life, or that sectarian differences habitually assumed the form of civil insurrection. A respect for law and order, as formerly noticed, is a prevalent sentiment in the older established states; and it is much to be deplored that in New York, and some other towns and cities, the heterogeneous character of the population should lead to such unseemly disturbances as have been adverted to.

As yet successful in carrying the elections, we cannot imagine that the Know-Nothings will push their doctrines to an extremity which would turn the tide of emigration from the United States. With all the pretensions to ignorance which their name imports, they at all events know this—that Canada presents as attractive a field for every variety of rural settlers as the most favoured states in the Union; and that if the Irish and Germans carry their labour and capital thither in preference, the Americans will have little reason to rejoice in the triumphs of the Know-Nothings. But this, we say, cannot have entered into the designs of the association; and after all, we venture to hint that the sublimely patriotic doctrines of Know-Nothingism, besides aiming at a reform of the naturalisation laws, probably point to objects not confided to the multitude. Independently of a means of recruiting the fallen fortunes of broken-down politicians, the schemes of the order may be presumed to embrace ends more ingeniously comprehensive. An old and well-known plan for diverting a pack of hounds from the pursuit of particular game, is to draw a red-herring across the trail. The cry of 'America for

the Americans,' by distracting the popular scent from certain delicate questions—slavery, for example—may prove a remarkably effective red-herring!

W. C.

TWENTY THOUSAND FIRES.

DURING a period of nearly a quarter of a century, Mr Baddeley has prepared for the pages of the *Mechanics' Magazine* a curious analysis of the annual fires which have taken place in the metropolis, derived from official documents. The very efficient organisation of the Fire Brigade, renders easy a full tabulation of the London fires; because one individual, Mr Braidwood, is the governor of the whole—the real Fire-king of London. Mr Baddeley began with an account of the London fires in 1830; but it may be suspected that for some years his information was less complete than it afterwards became, as the numbers did not then reach a third of their present amount. At length, in 1833, the London Fire-engine Establishment was formed; ten of the companies—namely, the Alliance, the Atlas, the Globe, the Imperial, the London Assurance, the Protector, the Royal Exchange, the Sun, the Union, and the Westminster—agreeing to associate their engines, and place them all under one management, and to provide the men with more efficient dresses and apparatus than they had had before. The ensuing year was the first year of large numbers in the London fires. The numbers in the three preceding years had been 287, 220, and 209; but now they rose to 592. The truth evidently is, that a more correct ascertainment of actual fires became practicable. The real numbers have never once gone back to the nominal accounts of those three years. In 1834, they reached 651. This number is, however, made up of many curious items. It appears that a notable proportion of all the fires is confined to the chimneys in which they originate; and that another proportion, large, though not so large, consists of false alarms. Now, this is an odd affair. How happen these false alarms? Are the London boys such incorrigible wags, that they will 'go fetch the engines' whether required or not? One-tenth of the rattling journeys of the engines in 1833 were on false alarms; one-tenth again in 1834; and the records of the successive years shew a ratio seldom much less than this.

If an inquiry were made in what month of the year do fires most prevail, there would appear an antecedent probability that the majority would be in the winter rather than the summer months; because more chamber-fires, lamps, candles, and gaslights—the causes of most fires—are then burning. This is borne out by the tabular returns. The lowest month is always somewhere between May and August, generally in June or July; while the highest month is somewhere between November and March. It would not, however, be so easy to guess on which day of the week fires would be most likely to occur; nevertheless, even this has some materials for probability about it; for on the night between Saturday and Sunday, there is an immense amount of activity in the London shops; gas and candles are more in requisition than on any other night; and it is found that, on an average of a series of years, this is a very critical time of the week in respect to accidental fires. Indeed, Sunday is one of the most calamitous days in this matter, be the cause what it may. Another inquiry is, whether any particular hour of the day or night is more marked than any other by the prevalence of fires. This is answered in a very decided way; from eight to ten o'clock in the evening is the period in which the breaking out of fires most extensively occurs, while seven or eight o'clock in the morning is the period of least disaster. The numbers become in many respects a sensitive barometer of domestic and industrial usages. Six o'clock in the

morning is an hour rather more disastrous than those which immediately precede and follow it; and this may be attributed to the lighting of many thousand workshop-fires at that hour.

The yearly fires have steadily increased as the houses of London have increased. In 1834, including both true and false alarms, the number was 651, among which was one of historic celebrity—the burning of the Houses of Parliament: 1835 was a bad year—there were 108 fires within so small a space as three weeks in August. Lest it might be thought that the false alarms unduly swell the numbers, it may be well to state, that though the engines do in these cases depart on a good work when there is no work to do, there are yet more cases of chimneys on fire to which the engines do not respond at all; inasmuch that the total number of actual fires is greater than is indicated in the lists. Mr Baddeley states, that there are so many as 100 to 150 chimneys on fire every month in London. The official number of fires in 1836 rose yet higher than before—excluding the small fry of chimneys on fire just adverted to, it amounted to 756. There were 794 buildings actually damaged by these fires. Mr Baddeley records two singular expeditions among those to which the engines were subjected this year—one in search of *sunshine*, and one in search of *northern lights*. 'On Sunday, September 25, about half-past four o'clock in the morning, a red glare of light in the sky occasioned a general alarm of fire eastward to be given to the firemen all over the metropolis. No certain information being obtained as to the locality of the fire, the engines were driven at conjecture—some along Ratchiff Highway, some down the Commercial Road, while others went to Mile End. On reaching these points, however, the first appearance became gradually fainter.' The Will-o'-the-wisp, in fact, turned out to be the solar beams before sunrise. In the other case, about half-past eight in the morning, on October 18, 'a sudden cry of "Fire!" burst forth from hundreds of tongues, in consequence of a crimson glare of light appearing in the horizon. The apparent danger was north-east; and so strongly did the light resemble that of a fiercely-spreading conflagration, as to deceive the oldest fireman. The alarm was greatly strengthened by what seemed to be clouds of smoke rising up after the crimson glare, streaking and rolling away beneath it. Thirteen engines and a large body of firemen were turned out in search of the dreadful conflagration, and pedestrians as well as vehicles kept pouring down from the west end of the town to see the fire. The alarm upon this occasion was not confined to London: at Dublin, Leyden, Utrecht, Strasburg, Troyes, Rennes, and Nantes, the same alarm was created, attended with a similar turn-out of the firemen, military, &c.'

The years 1837, '38, and '39, were marked, like their predecessors, by formidable numbers of fire, amounting to 717, 755, and 755. Engines increased in number, firemen became more skilled and daring, fire-proof dresses were adopted, and fire-insurance companies multiplied in number, yet the Londoners do not seem to have been more careful than before: they had more houses to burn, and they burned more houses. The fire-proof dress here mentioned is an ingenious affair; although it should rather be called smoke-proof. It was invented by Lieutenant-colonel Paulin, commanding the corps of Sapeurs Pompiers at Paris. The dress, made of leather, consists of a kind of hood, which reaches down to the waist, and is there fastened by a belt. The wrists are secured by strings. Two glass eye-pieces afford uninterrupted vision to the fireman. A small leathern hose is attached to the back of the dress, through which a supply of fresh air is forced by the working of an engine, or by a pair of small bellows—the breathed or vitiated air escapes at apertures left for that purpose. A lamp and a whistle complete the apparatus. Mr Braidwood himself tried this smoke-

proof dress at a fire in Baking Lane. Having equipped himself, he descended into a cellar, and there remained till the fire was completely extinguished, passing through the parts where the smoke was most dense, and yet experiencing no inconvenience. The firemen, who were not so equipped, were not able to remain in any part of the cellar more than ten minutes, from the difficulty of breathing.

One of the most curious circumstances connected with these London fires, is the steady maintenance of a sort of general average among the causes which lead to them. Not only are certain months predominant as fire-months, and certain days of the week, and hours of the day, but the causes of accident present a pretty uniform ratio. Accidents with candles always head the list; defective or ignited flues generally come next; while linen airing before the fire, is usually either third or fourth on the list. As for the rest, almost every year presents examples of fires originating from apparel ignited on the person, palpable instances of carelessness, children playing with fire, drunkenness, sparks from fires, fires kindled in improper places, fireworks, overheated furnaces, escape of gas, gun-powder, lucifer-match making, loose ignited shavings, spontaneous ignition of vegetable substances, defective stoves and stove-pipes, and fire-heat applied to various purposes of trade and manufacture. How many bed-curtains have been ignited by ladies reading the last new novel in bed, or by apprentices reading *Robinson Crusoe*, it would be hard to tell; but the records give formidable numbers in respect to candle-accidents. Thus in 1837, we find 47 fires from 'candles igniting bed-curtains'; 29 from 'candles igniting window-curtains'; and 49 from 'various accidents from candles.' These numbers in 1838 were 61, 33, and 38—a sum-total almost exactly equal, though differing in its component numbers; while the numbers in 1839 were 57, 27, and 44. Fires from accidents with candles in three successive years, 125, 132, 128—is there not here something like a law of human thoughtlessness?

It appears to us, that if the natural philosophers were to consult the firemen, they might obtain valuable information respecting various meteoric phenomena, which are interesting to both classes. The firemen have much useless and annoying trouble in running after meteors, under the impression that those meteors are burning houses; and they thus acquire the habit of watching the meteors very narrowly, that they may 'know them again' when they see them. These false alarms were adverted to in a former paragraph; and we may here give Mr Baddeley's description of a scene in November 13, 1838—the middle of November is a period rich in meteoric phenomena. On the night in question, the engines were kept running about for two hours—to Hampstead, to Kilburn, to Ealing, to St John's Wood, to Holloway, seeking a large fire, but finding it not. 'The first object that attracted the attention of observers was, several stars of an ordinary size shooting from their original spots, and falling apparently to the earth, when it seemed as if they exploded, for immediately afterwards the horizon was brilliantly illuminated by a vivid light. This within ten minutes disappeared, but another light of a most splendid description rose from the same quarter, and gradually expanded over the whole hemisphere. At intervals, immense masses of crimson vapour appeared, intermingled with branches of silvery coruscations, which at times formed a rich and variegated canopy, covering the entire expanse from the east to the western hemisphere, presenting a most gorgeous spectacle.' Scientific men are not often up and out at three o'clock on a November morning, to see such a sight as this.

The year just named was rendered memorable by the burning of the Royal Exchange. But it is not of individual fires we are treating: rather of certain general characteristics. The three years 1840, '41,

and '42, exhibited an increase of fires fully equivalent to the increase in persons and houses; shewing that, with all our vaunted improvements, we had not learned to be more careful in respect to fires. The numbers were 863, 855, and 912. In the first ten years of the existence of the Fire Brigade, there were added to the range of the metropolis 750 new squares and streets, and 45,000 new houses; an increase which of course rendered an increase of fires probable, or even certain. The next three years—1843, '44, and '45—exhibited, as the numbers of London fires, 911, 926, and 875. The year 1846 brings us to four figures; and it is really curious to notice how near to equality are the numbers from that time to the present. In the last eight years, 1846 to 1853, both inclusive, there have never been less than 990, and never more than 1159 fires in the year.

The false alarms have become quite a recognised part of the affair; they seldom depart far from an average of eighty in the year—eighty times in a year the engines rattle about in search of that which is not; and there is also a pretty general average of cases in which the fire is confined to a chimney. Then, taking the report for 1853, it appears that out of the total number of fires, 87 were chimneys, and 75 false alarms, leaving just 900 as the number of real houses on fire. We shall probably not be far wrong if we look for a number of such fires, varying from 900 to 1000, in each year for three or four years to come; while, if Mr Baddeley's estimate be correct, there will be nearly twice as many small calamities which do not receive aid from the fire-engines.

As we have reached the latest year of these curious tables, let us notice the entries for 1853 a little more closely. December was the most disastrous month, and from nine to ten in the evening was the most disastrous hour of the day; thus corresponding with the results of earlier years. Of the 900 real fires, the cases in which insurance had been effected on the building and contents, on the building alone, on the contents alone, and on neither, were respectively 418, 113, 66, and 303—thus affording a pretty fair index of the extent to which fire-insurance is carried in London. We noticed in an earlier paragraph the kinds of establishments which seem most prone to suffer from disaster by fire. The classes of buildings enumerated in 1853 amount to no less than 112; striking off the round hundred, and selecting the twelve to which the highest numbers are attached, we find the following:—331 private dwellings, 43 carpenters, 41 licensed victuallers, 32 sale-shops, 23 drapers, 22 stables, 20 oilmen, 19 cabinet-makers, 19 bakers, 16 smiths and braziers, 14 book-sellers, 13 milliners. We have, before spoken of the causes of conflagration; and we find, on looking at the list, that accidents from candles seem to have increased in a greater ratio than the fires themselves. What are we to think of 117 accidents to bed and window curtains, and 101 other accidents from lighted candles? Are curtains more numerous, or candles more numerous, or people more careless? Fire-sparks were responsible for 50 burnings of houses; loose shavings for 41; fragments of burning tobacco or cigars for 28; linen while airing for 39; spontaneous combustion of hay, lampblack, nut-galls, oil, rags, oily saw-dust, and oily rubbish, for 29; defective gas-arrangements for 87; while the overheating or bad arrangement of flues, furnaces, ovens, stoves, and boilers, occasioned 172 disasters.

There is something approaching to an average in that which we would rather regard as wholly beyond the reach of such a law of sadness. We allude to the deaths by fire. In the last seventeen years, the average deaths by the fires in the metropolis have been twenty-three per annum; and it is surprising to observe how little the deaths have varied from this average in any one year. This number would probably be much

greater, but for the praiseworthy exertions of the Society for Preserving Life from Fire. This society, established in 1844, has placed fire-escapes and efficiently instructed men in various parts of the metropolis, where they are to be met with all night on every night of the year. In 1844, there were eleven fire-escape stations, which were instrumental in saving nine lives; in 1853, the stations had increased to forty; while during the whole period of ten years, the fire-escapes saved no less than 209 lives—fifty of which were in the year 1852.

If any reader, having before him the Census returns for 1841 and 1851, were to ascertain how many houses there were in the metropolis at those two periods, he might perchance be able to calculate how many fires there were to a thousand houses, and might further ascertain whether that ratio seems to be increasing or decreasing. We think it increases—more shame to the community. There are other curious results to be obtained, perhaps, from Mr Baddeley's records of *Twenty Thousand London Fires* in twenty-four years; but these we will leave to the imagination of the reader.

One piece of intelligence interesting to ourselves we had nearly forgotten—London owes to Edinburgh the origination of the Fire Brigade; it borrowed the idea, and it borrowed the Fire-king to work it out. Mr Braidwood organised the Edinburgh Fire-engine Establishment nearly thirty years ago.

M A R E T I M O.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE FIFTH OF JUNE.

WE left Walter Masterton—after he had torn himself away from Bianca, just at the moment when he conceived that his strong arm should be near to protect her—proceeding with Julio Castelnouve into the city of Palermo. He separated, as we have said, from his friend, hoping to meet him later in the day; and went straight to the house of Mr Bell, the banker who had previously supplied him with money. There is nothing like manliness, even in deception. Had he attempted to skulk in some retired place, the police—accustomed to the habits of ordinary evildoers, professional despisers of law and authority—would probably have laid hands on him at once. He went just where they never expected him to go; and whilst a sentimental young wine-merchant, named Hopkins, from Marsala, was dodged down a quiet lane, and arrested as a conspirator that evening, just as he was eyeing a balcony and producing a guitar, our straightforward friend was concluding arrangements for a pleasure-excursion—intended to have a very serious termination—in one of the most central and open houses of the city.

Mr Bell was averse to compromising himself with the government, but indisposed to leave a countryman in the lurch. At first, when Walter laid the case before him, he professed incompetency; but whilst he spoke, the conviction came to his mind, that if he had premeditated complicity, things could not have been differently arranged. His son, a young gentleman with a white face, a lip, sleepy eyes, quiet manners, and an elegant absence of intelligence—like many Sicilian English—had projected an excursion to witness the opening of the Tunny Fisheries at the Favignana islands—a ceremony that takes place every year on the fifth of June, or thereabouts. Some English travellers, among others Lord Augustus F—, were to accompany him; and expectations were entertained

that the voyage would be 'jolly' and 'prime,' founded partly on the fineness of the weather, partly on the extent of the supply of bottled porter and other stimulants, stowed away in the hold of the *Santa Rosalia*, chartered for the occasion. We shall not have much to say about these high-spirited youths, except to request for them the gratitude of our readers—all of whom, we presume, to be friends of Paolo di Falco.

They thought the little that was told them of the story very odd; but being generous amidst their love of fun and pleasure, gave up the inestimable services of tall John (a footman specially attached to Lord Augustus F——), and agreed to take Walter on board under his name. Mr Bell transacted this business very ably, exacting only compliance with two conditions—first, that Walter should pass the night in his house, and not shew himself at door or window; second, that Charles should not be led into joining in any perilous adventure. For the first of these reasons, Julio Castelnouve was set aside quite; and Walter once more found himself, after so many vicissitudes—so many promises of assistance picked up by the way—compelled to rely entirely on his own energies, just as when he journeyed first from Trapani with a whole month of time before him.

There are few things we seem to notice less attentively than the changes produced within ourselves by contact with men, who, from motives of interest or sympathy, are compelled to shew their cards as it were—to allow us to look over their shoulders as they play the game of life. Those who transact much business, whether the affairs of states or individuals are concerned, become wiser every time they see, understanding what they see, a human passion in labour of an action. Until this course of experience be opened, history remains a series of enigmatical pictures; but then each day supplies a key to a hundred mysteries, and the doings of the time present explain, and are explained by the doings of the time past. This is the meaning of the common saying, that knowledge of men is not to be got from books, although in reality no single perishing event teaches a true lesson until affiliated with the whole tradition of humanity. Walter had no time to make these reflections; but he felt that within a few weeks some of the faculties most requisite for the man who does not move in the harness of routine, some of the secrets of human nature which those who meddle with its fortunes, individual or collective, must know, had been developed within him or revealed—that he was stronger, and yet more prudent—fuller of resolution, yet less inclined to trust to rash impulse—at once dissimulate and honest—capable in all points of the arduous task he had undertaken to perform. He went on board the *Santa Rosalia* with his young companions, all in search of pleasurable impressions, feeling that sensation of power which sometimes makes man proud, even to his own destruction. He could not doubt that, since his arrival in Sicily was known, measures of increased severity would be taken to guard the Prisoner; but he never contemplated the possibility of failure. When the mind has long been in one attitude, tending towards a special object, it is difficult to bring it back to that repose and indifference in which alone it is possible to calculate the chances, and prepare for the disappointments, of the future. The soldier, who has represented victory in his imagination, continues to march on after the death-wound has been struck, and dies with visions of glory within him. Walter could not apply the wisdom of experience, or expend the strength he had earned in finding reasons for despair; but resolutely threw himself forward in thought to the appointed hour, when he was to meet Paolo di Falco coming down in the darkness with outstretched hands on the rocky beach of Maretimo—no matter what dangers might then close around them both—what

sights of sorrow might be ready to fix his gaze, when he turned from that brotherly embrace! Do not suppose that the memory of Bianca was absent from him on this voyage; he could not forget her; and whilst the hours were inactive, necessarily busied his mind in hunting out the secret of her character. She appeared to him under aspects perpetually changing and contradictory—as the companion and protégée of the Marchese Belmonte, and as the friend of his rebellious daughter; in feud with the Di Falco family, and conspiring for the liberty and happiness of its only heir; intimate with the aristocratic Castelnoves, and apparently bound by some tie of sympathy with Jeppo, the kidnapper. Walter was sufficiently young and pure-minded to conceive Bianca in all these various relations as perfectly innocent; and perhaps the very mystery by which she was surrounded, gave an additional fascination to her beauty. But when he translated his sentiments into prose, it sometimes seemed impossible to him that, once the knot of this intrigue untied, he should be bold enough, instead of proceeding alone on his way in search of new adventures, to ask this strange being to be his wife, and return to England with her, and introduce her to his friends, and look at her over a dining-table, perhaps in Portland Place, between two decanters and two silver candlesticks, with grave elder brother Thomas on one hand, and stout sister Fanny on the other—after having circulated an indefinite number of cards to an indefinite number of friends, and announced the happy event in the fashionable papers! Well, Signor Walter, pass her by, if you please; but remember when the world begins to hear of your name, and parliamentary honours descend upon you—when you have rounded your person and your estate—all things in this life may begin to seem tasteless and rapid, because the name of Bianca will only recall a vision that flashed across your path in youth, lingered a moment as if yearning to be seized and made of this life, and then faded away, not to be recalled by any means whatever.

But youth, pursuing and yet checking its speed to reflect ere it seizes what it can seize but once, will not anticipate the anguish of desolate age. Because the heart gives forth bright tones when the beautiful things of the earth brush by, it disdains to believe that the strings can slacken or snap. Perhaps Walter, like many other men, was incapable of two heroisms at the same time. As the *Santa Rosalia* glided gently out of port, he was desperately determined to sacrifice his life, if necessary, for the freedom of Paolo; but not so well determined to set aside his pride or prudence for Bianca's sake, although he had looked at her with the audacity of love, and obeyed her as we only venture to obey when we would command. Men reap as they sow; and let us not spend our anxiety on the froward sons of this world, who spurn the happiness they seek. The sun is up, and the boat is on its way, stealing like a shadow along the waters that shine up to the base of Monte Pellegrino. A vast panorama of hills and slopes, verdant to the summit, with bare rocks cropping through here and there, stretches behind. Close at hand, however, the travellers have newer objects of admiration; the base of the precipice is perforated with passages, and caves, and grottos, into the echoing depths of which the expanding wake of the boat sends eddies that waken a thousand murmurs. They keep close under the rocks, and sometimes linger provokingly. Walter, as the price of his passage, is compelled to join in geological discussions.

We will not describe all the details of this voyage, which was delightful only to those in whom we feel no interest. The *Santa Rosalia* soon doubled Capo di Gallo; but the wind not favouring, night found them no further on their way than Sferacavallo, where they anchored in a sandy creek, beneath an old tower on a solitary rock. Walter had earned a right to sleep; but

whilst the travellers snored under the tarpaulin, and the crew, wrapped in capotes, stretched themselves on the sloping sandy shore, he sat at the prow of the bark, and mentally struggled with the difficulties of the future. The shore around, over which his gaze sometimes wandered, was barren and deserted, but the lights of a village shone amidst some trees a little way inland. An official visit had been paid to them by the coast-guard on their arrival, but they had instantly been recognised as harmless. The night wore on, and the moon rose. A large boat, with two broad lateen-sails, appeared gliding like a phantom towards the mouth of the creek; but instead of entering, turned sharply off, and lay-to some hundred yards out; then a small skiff, rowed by two men, glided in and took the shore on the opposite side of the piece of water which went deep into the land, like the shining head of a spear. Soon afterwards, the tramp of horses' feet was heard in a rocky defile, which opened in the hills upon the beach near where the *Santa Rosalia* lay, and a dozen men came riding rapidly out. One of them, advancing in front of the others, uttered a few words that seemed to Walter to have no meaning. He did not answer, being afraid to betray himself by his accent, for he thought it possible these persons might be police sent in pursuit of him. The skiff now came across the creek; and one of the men in it shouted: 'Buon' fortuna!' The cavaliers instantly answered; and perceiving that they had mistaken the *Santa Rosalia* for another bark, rode to one of the points forming the entrance of the creek. Here some of them dismounted, and a long conference took place; after which the skiff, with an additional person on board, left the shore, and the troop of strangers, with one led-horse, rode slowly away again into the silence of the country.

To one in Walter's mood of mind, this incident could scarcely fail to seem mysterious; and we need not be surprised that by the time the two-sailed bark, taking advantage of a slight breeze that breathed along-shore, began to shove away westward, he had connected what he had seen with the adventure in which he was himself engaged. The power of strong preconception is great. On another occasion, he would simply have imagined some romantic story, the truth of which he could never know, and figured these night-riders as engaged in the service of their own passions. As it was, all secret manoeuvres seemed to have reference to the scheme in which he was engaged; and he remained in doubt only whether the persons he had seen were friends or foes, bent on assisting or counterworking his machinations. When morning came, these thoughts had prevented him from taking his rest; but he had ample opportunities of repairing lost time in the tedious coasting journey he had yet to undergo.

The *Santa Rosalia* was to have reached Trapani on the evening of the fourth of June at latest, and, indeed, with a brisk wind, the voyage might have been performed in twenty-four hours; but an unaccountable series of calms retarded their progress, and the crew were compelled to row nearly all the last night, under the impulse of great rewards promised by Lord Augustus F—, who would have preferred, he said, the loss of five dinners to that of the opening of the tunny-fishery. Money makes boats as well as other things to go; and just as the sun rose above the Val di Mazzara, Walter, who had passed an hour of intense anxiety, made out that the dim land he had seen from the commencement of the dawn on either hand belonged to the island of Levanzo and the coast of Sicily. The boats moving on the same course with themselves, interchanging lusty hails, were all laden with fishermen, or peasantry, or ladies and gentlemen from near cities, gathering for the sight. Hundreds of them, of various dimensions, had been distinguished as soon as day began to break—some advancing steadily, impelled by huge oars; others poling near the shore;

others trying their sails, which sometimes filled out and took them on a few feet, and then flapped lazily against the masts. The long, sinuous strait between the precipitous shores of lofty Levanzo and Favignana on the one hand, and the mainland on the other, was as gaily filled as any Venetian canal on a festival-day. The bells of Trapani and the neighbouring villages were gaily ringing out, and mingled their clear, silver sounds with the murmur of the floating multitude. As the sun rose, the water seemed to grow more and more transparent; and in many places rocks and valleys beneath the keels of the boats, far down, could be distinguished, with here and there fields of sea-weed and innumerable fish, like shadows, darting to and fro.

All the craft afloat were converging towards the narrow passage between Levanzo and Favignana, bounded by two walls of rock, with landing-places, here and there crowded with people. Here was established the Tonnara—a huge trap, constructed of nets, several miles in circumference, with innumerable chambers, all conducting to a central one called the *Corpou*, or Chamber of Death. Its outline could be made out by the floats and the dismantled boats stationed here and there. The spectators were gradually ranging themselves in a vast circle around, the prows of their barks turned inward. A thousand flags and streamers enlivened the air, which was filled also with the hum of human voices. But above these, and above the splashing of the oars, rose a regular monotonous sound—the creaking of numerous windlasses that had been working since daylight to lift up the netted flooring of the *corpou*, already filled by a herd of tunnies, from the depth to which it had sank, and thus force the victims into sight and reach of their captors. Already, as the *Santa Rosalia* moved slowly towards its station, there seemed to be an unusual commotion on the water; and the shining sides of many a huge fish darting wildly to and fro, foretold that the work of death might soon commence.

The chief actors in this scene—terrible from the size and power of the intended victims—were several hundred fishermen, distributed in large boats over the surface of the *corpou*. They stood eagerly leaning over the bulwarks, half clothed, their harpoons already raised, waiting for the signal. One of the gangs was not more than thirty yards from the place where the *Santa Rosalia* had taken her position; and the English youths on board congratulated themselves on the probability of their seeing all the incidents of the massacre to perfection. Walter, however, paid little attention to what so deeply interested the others—partly because his mind was busy with the chances of that day in which he had so much to do, yet saw as yet no means of doing it, partly because every now and then his eyes were involuntarily attracted towards a large two-sailed bark, moored beyond five or six smaller ones, which instinct rather than observation told him was the very one which had paid so mysterious a night-visit to the inlet of Sferacavallo. Unlike the others, it contained only a few spectators, collected in a group towards the prow. The sun shone too dazzlingly from that direction to enable Walter to make out what manner of men they were.

Still the windlasses creaked, and presently a wild savage shout, that went increasing ever in vehemence all round the vast circle of spectators, announced that the first blow had been struck. Clusters of harpoons began to flash as they rose and fell, and long stains of blood soon polluted the surface of the water. It was a frightful butchery. The fish, brought up irresistibly within reach of their enemies, dashed and floundered to and fro—at first breaking away from ill-aimed blows, leaving fragments of flesh upon the dulled harpoons. Presently, however, the work was carried on more regularly; and huge tunnies were hauled on board, one after the other, and hurled

struggling into the hold prepared to receive them. The crew of the boat nearest the *Santa Rosalia* seemed to be animated to fury. Shouting with fierce joy, they plied their weapons so unintermittingly, that nothing could be distinguished but a mass of waving caps, naked arms, flashing harpoons, and purple-stained scaly monsters, dragged over the bulwarks. To some natures there seems to be a strange delight in bloodshedding, and perhaps of all the spectators assembled, Walter was the only one who, whilst unable now to turn away his eyes from the scene, felt sick at heart as if he had been accomplice in some crime. At anyrate, one continued cheer urged on the desperate work for two whole hours, when the victims became fewer, and it was necessary to bring the net, with panting fish here and there, up to the very surface. Then the satiated sight-seers began gradually to break up the circle, and the passengers of the *Santa Rosalia* were talking of a move towards Trapani, when Walter, scarcely able to breathe from surprise, begged them to stay a moment.

The crew of fishermen who had attracted most of his attention, having abandoned the large punt in which they had worked, were rowing past in a small boat, still all covered with blood. He thought, nevertheless, that he recognised several of their faces; and leaning from the prow, and looking more attentively, with his hand over his eyes, became convinced beyond a doubt that the man who sat at the rudder was no other than his old friend Giacomo, the commander of the *Filippa*, whom he supposed to have perished. His first impulse was to cry aloud; but he checked himself, and seeing that the boat made towards the very bark which had already attracted so much of his notice, he turned to his companions, and said:

'Gentlemen, I thank you for your kindness. Excuse my sudden departure.'

With these words he leaped over the bulwarks; and without staying to apologise for the confusion he created as he went, scrambled through the half-dozen boats which had luckily not yet broken their order, and almost in a shorter space of time than it takes to relate this sudden manœuvre, was on board a large felucca, in presence not only of Giacomo and a portion of his crew, but of Luigi Spada himself, with young Julio Castelnouve. There was a rapid interchange of cries of welcome and recognition, after which Luigi exclaimed: 'We shall have time to tell our stories. Let us not be dramatic in presence of a crowd.'

The felucca was disentangled gradually from the fleet, and in about an hour succeeded in leaving the busy neighbourhood of the tonnara, and glided slowly out towards the open sea, beyond which the tall pyramidal form of Maretime rose, glittering like a tower of some superhuman fortress in the sunlight.

The accident which had thus once more united the friends of Paolo di Falco, seemed miraculous to them at the time, and a sure presage of success; but they did not reflect that the strength of the impulse which they had all obeyed, was sufficient to bring them without concert to that spot on that day, provided death or imprisonment did not prevent them. Luigi Spada took pride in relating his escape from the wreck of the *Filippa*. A shot from the *Re Ferdinando* had carried away the mast; and another hit the unfortunate vessel between wind and water. Giacomo determined to run on shore, but a sunken rock was in the way; the *Filippa* struck, and went down almost immediately. Several men perished; but a boat large enough to contain the remainder was got out, and darkness coming on, they were enabled to escape the observation of the *Re Ferdinando*. On attempting to land, however, they found all the coast alive with gendarmes, and were compelled to put to sea again. They got out a sail, and stood along the coast westward. In the morning, they were in sight of the Bay of Palermo; but it would have been dangerous to land. Off Capo di Gallo they

fell in with a felucca, which they boarded and appropriated, exercising the right of the stronger, sending the owners ashore in their own boat. Afterwards they made a sheltered nook near Capo di Gallo, and despatched a messenger to Palermo. Events, however, had proceeded more rapidly than they had anticipated. Angela had been made prisoner, and Walter was in the house of Mr Bell. The messenger found Julio Castelnouve at his father's palace, in conclave with two or three friends whom he had hastily assembled. What kind of men they were was not explained to Walter at that time, although, from certain hints dropped, he judged them to be of those patriotic banditti, specimens of which had not yet appeared to him. At anyrate, their party, swelling as they proceeded, had accompanied Julio to the rendezvous at Sferacavallo, and were to be in waiting there to receive the party in company with Paolo di Falco, every night for at least a week after the fifth of June. These professional conspirators, who had never yet succeeded in anything they had undertaken, still obstinately set aside the possibility of failure from their calculations.

Walter remembered his indignation against Luigi on the day when he found himself prisoner in the hands of Pipo the smuggler, and was tempted to ask for an explanation of what had appeared so suspicious to him then. But the aspect of affairs had much changed; and the presence of Luigi and Giacomo, in company with Julio on that day, seemed proof so positive of their good intentions, that they might be forgiven a little under-plotting on their private account. The great point now was the liberation of Paolo; that accomplished, he would become the master of his own actions—although flight was now impossible, for the only occupation of his freedom would necessarily be a struggle for the liberty of Angela.

As time wore on, Walter, who also believed that that day's work would be successfully carried out, began to look forward with increased anxiety to the terrible moment when, checking Paolo's effusions of joy and gratitude, he should be obliged to tell him the whole truth, and humble himself before him as the unwilling cause of misfortune. The hours, instead of seeming to linger, as he had expected, flew rapidly by, with the speed of a stream hurrying to leap a precipice. He nursed the pleasant anguish of protracted suspense, which often precedes, and seems to atone beforehand for intense joy. They floated some time idly about a mile off Favignana; but the wind at length rising, they tacked to and fro in the channel, through and across which several other boats were scudding, like great white sea-gulls, their sails flashing in the sunlight. As evening drew on, Giacomo began to talk of a gale from the south-east, although he said there would be probably time to run under the shelter of the rocks at the appointed place, after which, with the fortune of Paolo di Falco on board, they could go before the wind, and seek smooth water behind the northern point of Levanzo. Walter, remembering the terrible time he had passed on that sea, felt sick at heart as he heard the rattling of the ropes, and the straining of the timbers, as the felucca leaned over under its heavy sails.

A confused shouting, oaths, threats, entreaties, the canvas thrown aback, a terrible shock, a cry of terror—these things are the sure signs at sea of a collision. Walter, who was lying upon deck, saw a sail, wrapped confusedly round a mast, appear over the bows as they were hurled into the air by a wave; but ere he could run to the bulwarks, it had disappeared, and nothing was visible but the upturned despairing face of a man struggling in the waters. Two or three sailors also were clinging to the ropes, and scrambled lightly on board. The felucca, for a moment quite abroad, the man at the helm having been thrown stunned upon deck, splashed heavily in the trough of the wave like

a huge log, and the face rose to the level of the bulwarks.

'A rope, a rope!' shouted Walter, suiting the action to the word; but the man evidently could scarcely swim, and had lost his presence of mind. His hands grasped the air wildly, and then he disappeared. Obeying that irresistible impulse which sometimes shews itself as a sign that we are all brothers—bound together by invisible fibres, along which sympathy thrills even when we would remain isolated—Walter shouted, and leaped overboard.

The wave clasped him for a moment, as if it would have stifled him for his rashness; but he soon rose, cleaving it with a powerful sweep of his arms; and whilst the felucca, with a lurch and a dive, obeying the helm, once more darted away, Walter reached the spot where the drowning man, already with the bitter taste of death on his lips, rose a full head and shoulders from the water. The Englishman, a mighty swimmer, had now no fear either for himself or the other; and keeping him resolutely at a distance—for he sought to cling to him more firmly—looked around as the wave lifted him. The felucca was more than a hundred yards off; but it had tacked, and came back, rising majestically, shewing half its keel. They flung out a rope, which Walter seized with a firm hand; and in a few moments he was once more on the deck of the felucca, and sank down exhausted by the side of the person he had saved.

'Wonderful are the ways of Providence!' cried Luigi, taking off his cap in an access of involuntary devotion—for the event that had occurred seemed to him, and Giacomo, and Julio, and all the sailors, both those of the felucca and those who had escaped from the foundered boat, to have all the character of a miracle. 'Wonderful and mysterious! Walter:—the man whom you have snatched from death is no other than the Marchese Belmonte!'

'Look at the man,' said Giacomo in a hoarse whisper to young Castelnouve, who kept as much as possible in the rear. 'He must know why the Englishman is here. Let us see whether he is swayed more strongly by hate or gratitude.'

The marchese, who had by this time recovered to a certain extent his presence of mind, repeated the name, 'Walter, Walter, Walter!' looked at his preserver, then at the group around—smiled—first kindly, then bitterly—glanced at the tall rocks of Maretimo, glowing above the agitated sea in the rays of the setting sun—understood that his victim was about to be snatched from him under his very eyes—and overcome by emotion, that sent the blood in purple flow to his countenance, swooned heavily. By the time he recovered, the felucca was gently gliding under shelter of the lofty island, about half a mile from its nearest point; and although a few clouds moved swiftly overhead, like birds taking their flight from the summit of the rocks, there were innumerable stars far above, and innumerable flashes of light reflecting them in the heaving waters.

The marchese was too well braced to the vicissitudes of life, to spend his time or strength in vain menaces, or any attempt to turn Walter and his companions from the task they had undertaken. He maintained complete silence, or acknowledged in polite phrases the attentions which the Englishman proffered him; and even condescended to smile, as he said that the excellent brandy poured from a large stone-bottle, being French, was no doubt smuggled. They had carried him into a little cabin, partly out of respect, partly that he might not overhear the discussion which was taking place as to his fate. All the chiefs of the expedition proposed that as soon as Paolo was on board, the marchese should be landed in his stead; but some of the men, to whom reports of an approaching insurrection had come, talked of keeping him as the first hostage;

whilst others, inaccessible to public motives, boldly proposed to put him to death, in revenge for the execution of one of their comrades, hanged recently for a trifling offence—merely a deep stab with a knife, inflicted according to the true laws of Sicilian honour. Several of their companions, too, had recently perished in the wreck of the *Filippa*; and when races are in feud, the rights of vengeance are easily expanded. Any Neapolitan life may be taken in payment for a Sicilian life.

Walter, who knew the proneness of this crew to adopt summary measures, and had that morning seen the zeal with which they indulged their sanguinary propensities, was by no means reassured by the whispered promise of Giacomo, that he would stand by him to the last; he even believed that the first impulse of the sturdy captain had been anything but benign. However, nothing evil seemed to be meditated for the present; for the time of idleness was rapidly passing, and every pulse began to beat with impatience, every eye to search the dark hollows of the island, and to watch the dim water-line for the form expected to appear.

They had yet an hour to wait, even if Paolo was exact to his time, when Walter once more went to speak to the marchese. He had learned from the sailors of the wreck that the father of Angela had visited the prison of Maretimo; but they did not know whether he had seen Paolo. A terrible suspicion had flashed across his mind. During the governor's presence, the Prisoner would not be allowed to roam through the island; he was confined to his chamber. They were there, then, in vain. The prospect of disappointment roused a feeling of hate in his breast; his voice was stern as he said:

'We have no right to force you, Signor Marchese, to become an accomplice; but if I have any claim upon your gratitude, tell me if Paolo di Falco can be abroad at this hour.'

'Your claim is all-powerful,' replied the marchese, sadly but kindly; 'I will tell you the truth. You will wait here in vain; for the last month, Paolo di Falco has been confined to his cell, and I saw him there not many hours ago. Unless he can fly through iron bars and stone walls, your presence here will be as useful to him as your visit to Naples—well-intended, but nothing more. His—my poor daughter—is prisoner, by your fault—yet I forgive you—with the Black Band. Paolo di Falco is and must remain a state-prisoner of his majesty the sovereign of the Two Sicilies.'

Walter tried to provoke the marchese to further communication; but could not. He remarked, however, a curious circumstance—namely, that as the night wore on, this enemy of Paolo, perhaps yielding unwillingly to communicated sympathy, began to come to the door of his cabin, and gaze anxiously at the rocks which were separated sometimes from the boat only by the narrow barrier of surf, and ask: 'Has he come? Do you see anything?' just as if he desired the success of the undertaking.

The appointed hour was long past; some of the sailors had landed several times on a point of rock, and got to the land to search along-shore, but had neither heard nor seen anything. The excitement which had seized all on board suggested at length an extreme resolution. Who first spoke of it, it would be difficult to tell. But at length Walter, already half mad with suspense and anxiety, looked round, and in a voice trembling, but not irresolute, said:

'Yes, we have arms—guns, pistols, harpoons. Eight or nine men at least can be spared from the boat; the garrison of the castle may easily be taken by surprise. We can seize the sentinel, and intimidate the remainder; bloodshed is not necessary. But, whatever happens, Paolo di Falco must be free this night.'

The assenting murmurs of the crew, who had already got out their weapons, confirmed Walter in the opinion that the enterprise might be attempted with success; but the derisive chuckle with which his somewhat boyish idea that life need not be endangered was received, shewed that the Sicilians were moved less by affection for Di Falco than by desire of strife, and that they would fall upon the sleeping Neapolitans as savagely as they had fallen on the defenceless tunnies that morning in the Chamber of Death. The die, however, was cast; and although the marchese, disregarding the muttered threat of one of the men, urged them to forbear, assuring Walter with sincere energy that the garrison was strong and on its guard, the hand of destiny seemed to urge on the most irresolute. Three hours after sunset, Luigi Spada, Julio Castelnouve, and seven sailors, all well armed, chiefly with the terrible harpoon, had landed under the command of Walter, and had formed, ready to march, at the foot of a steep defile or crevice that led up into the interior. Giacomo, with the remainder of the crew, remained on board; and the felucca lay-to under shelter of a detached rock, a little south of the spot where the unfortunate *Marc Antoine* had struck and gone down, within earshot of the land.

'Which way will the finger of God point?' murmured the marchese, retiring into his cabin, and burying his face in his hands.

A LINCOLNSHIRE MAGISTRATE IN 1780.

As Sir Francis Whichcote was dressing one morning, he perceived the undergroom making very free with his wall-fruit. When breakfast was finished, he wrote a note addressed to the keeper of the House of Correction at Folkingham, which he ordered the culprit to take without delay. The note contained the following words: 'Give the bearer a dozen lashes—he will guess the reason.' This he signed with his initials. Whether the offender was conscience-smitten, or, what is still more probable, took advantage of the wet wafer to acquaint himself with the contents, I know not; but he bribed a helper in the stable, by the promise of a pot of beer and the loan of a horse, to take it for him. The governor, after reading the note, ordered the bearer to be tied up, and the directions were scrupulously obeyed, to the consternation of the poor fellow, who had no idea why he was thus treated until his return, when his account of what had taken place caused much merriment in the stable-yard. The tale very soon came to the ears of the baronet, who laughed very heartily, and took no other notice of it, than fining the delinquent half-a-crown for the privilege of being flogged by deputy, and ordered it to be given to the suffering party.—*Gunning's Reminiscences of Cambridge.*

POSSIBLE 'FUTURE' OF ENGLISH FARMING.

All these works of drainage, construction of buildings for stabulation, erection of steam-engines, &c., involve great outlays. The expense to the proprietor may be estimated at about L.8 per acre, and that of the farmer L.4. On the strong lands it must necessarily be more, but on the light much less. This fruitful outlay accomplished, and well executed, of course rents and profits rise beyond their former figure, and that even in places where they have been the least affected by the fall; it also produces an adequate return upon the new capital put into the soil. The land will then produce at least one-third more of alimentary substances. The gross average production, which was equal before to L.3 per acre, will then be L.4, 10s., while the average rent will probably rise to 30s., and the farmer's profit to 18s. per acre. The only question is this—are proprietors and farmers in a condition to furnish the required capital? The question is one involving no less an amount than four or five hundred millions sterling. For any other country than the United Kingdom, such an undertaking would be impossible; for her even it is an arduous one, but only

arduous. The nation which, in the course of a quarter of a century, has spent L.240,000,000 upon railways alone, may well employ twice that amount in renewing its agriculture.—*De Lavergne's Rural Economy of England.*

SONNETS.

[We copy these pieces from *Sonnets on the War*, by Alexander Smith, and the Author of *Balder* and *The Roman*, just published by Mr Bogue. The first, doubtless by Mr Smith, will be read with melancholy interest by those who know the amiable and lovely dedicatee—the wife of 'that dearer friend'—who bears what, we fear, are her life-long sufferings with a patient gentleness which is truly sublime. The other sonnet, we presume, is by Mr Dobell; and it fitly closes a work which, although here and there deformed by obscurities and affectations, contains much genuine, and a good deal of fine and noble poetry.]

DEDICATORY.

And if we sing—I and that dearer friend—
Take Thou our music. He dwells in thy light
Through sun and shower, blue day and starry night.
And sometimes for a moment thou dost blend
Thy moonrise with my twilight. Away I wend,
Like one from prayer. A life-long hood of pain
Thou wear'st, and never will a murmur stain
Thy spirit's crystalline until the end.
I pass into the world from thy abode;
A something of thy radiance pure and tried,
Hangs round my soul for days. I would to God
We could thy burden in two parts divide,
Thy heart were blithe as dawn, and side by side
We three should travel on life's sacred road!

GOOD-NIGHT.

The stars we saw arise are high above,
And yet our Even-song seems sung too soon.
Good-Night! I lay my hand—with such a love
As thou wert brother of my blood—upon
Thy shoulder, and methinks beneath the moon
Those sisters, Anglia and Caledon,
Lean towards each other. Aye, for Man is one;
We are a host ruled by one trumpet-call,
Where each, armed in his sort, makes as he may
The general motion. The well-tuned array
We see; yet to what victory in what wars
We see not; but like the revolving stars
Move on ourselves. The total march of all
Or men or stars God knows. Lord, lead us on!

BEAUTY OF THE DEAD.

But the beauty of death is not so easily explicable. How far its strange fascination may arise from the idea suggested of a repose, compared with which that of the most tranquil sleep is agitation, I will not pretend to determine. I knew a man of the highest order of mind, a man of fine feelings, but of great simplicity, and far above all affectation, who, standing by the corpse of his wife, said: 'It gives me very pleasurable sensations.' And yet he had truly loved her. The exquisite lines in *The Giaour*, in which the present aspect of Greece is compared to a beautiful corpse, are familiar to every reader. Lord Byron, in a note to the passage, remarks that 'this peculiar beauty remains but a few hours after death.' But I have been told, by those in the habit of making casts, that on the second day the expression is generally improved, and even on the third day it is often still finer. I have in several instances been asked to make drawings from the dead; and though in every case I have entered the room where the body lay somewhat reluctantly, yet I have invariably felt reluctant to quit it.—*Leslie's Handbook for Young Painters.*

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